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Synaeresis

arts + poetry



Vol. 3 No. 3 Issue 7

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CONTRIBUTOR

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Antiquated Astronaut – **Andreas Gripp**



Danielle Solo

Transmission

The so-called contradistinction of his “soon” to her “later”
the syzygy bursts open—first an airbag,
then the airbag and her breastpin—
watch her bones wobble
like water in the aftershocks
their clutches contained within one housing.
He swears they’re finally working as one unit,
a doppelkuplungsgetreibe—a doppel-what now?—
her doppelgänger static the front seat.
“I’m sorry pussy-cat” he says,
“I was thinking of something important.”

Microcosm

It's one of those microcosms, I guess
the dread clear on her face—her foundation falters,
flakes of pasty ashes—give her some tips here,
a response to fill the dead air.

Perhaps I wasn't clear—
something other than the grunting
of spectres that gyrate around her
owl-wide eyes blank in the vanity mirror.

It's been dark for how long now?
Her body pointing west.

The Hole in the Wall

In a hole in the wall halfway around the world
I slipped in for the taste of gin
the pub filled with people
frozen in photographs—
I sipped from the glass as I wandered past
touch starved tables, aching for a brush,
the downturned curve of the working boy's pint
while still, above, the sloping iron decorum rings
with the absence of laughter. What a shame
I had forgotten the typewriter.

History is a Little Man

History is a little man, bespectacled,
worn suitcase made of leather
full of photos; he keeps his favourites in his breast-pocket
most are wrinkled, fragments scrawled with names
and dribbled ink splatters. He whispers,
“I have seen factories rise, thick with smoke
and men with gold-ringed fingers
watched the rise of a thousand porcelain teacups,
lips crusted with marmalade,
I have heard castles crumble like bread crusts.
I spoke through the balding man, who as a child played
in memory’s bones
and a quartet rung with shiny,
mop-cut hair.
It has happened in these very halls,
with fantastical witches, and wizards,
the darkened stage, in tube stations,
and here,
it is happening
again.”

Writing on Heartache

Fill in the blankness:

angriest angrily angry angst angstrom angstroms

anguish anguished anguishes anguishing //

blanked blanker blankest blanket blanketed

blanketing blankets blanking blankly blankness

(He is my ghost writer)

It is a tale of love, heartache, and betrayal,

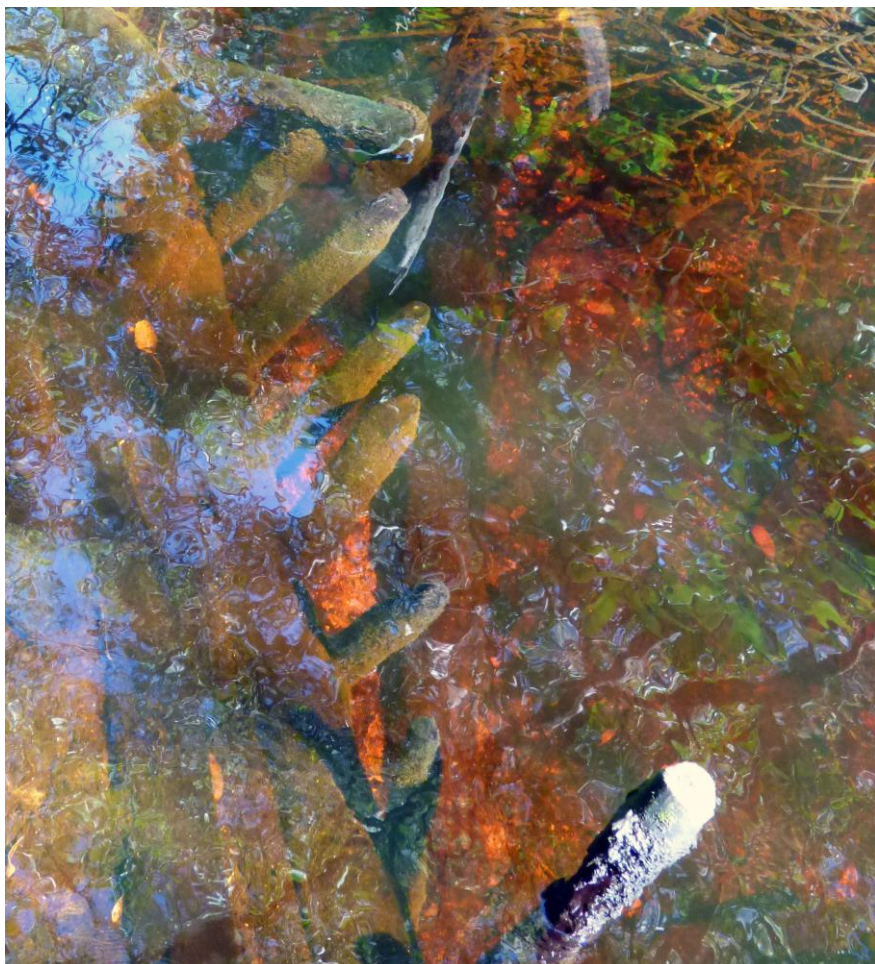
admiration, pride,

(and in the event of heartache) even sympathy.

There is nothing to eat and nowhere to sit down—simple,
and quintessentially American.

Danielle Solo is currently studying at Western, where she is completing an honours specialization in English Literature and Creative Writing with a minor in ethics. She has had poetry published in *Iconoclast*, as well as in *Occasus*, *Symposium*, and zines by *Insomniac Press* under the last name Bryl-Dam. She lives in London, Ontario with her python, elderly cat, and an abundance of ghosts. You can find her at <https://www.instagram.com/daniellesoloscribbings/>

Red Mangrove Three – **Warren Alexander**



Crispy Rice Cake Maker – **Warren Alexander**



Warren Alexander is an award-winning photographer whose works have appeared in over two dozen exhibits, including a show judged by a curator from the Guggenheim in New York. He was a Board Member of the largest art co-op in Brooklyn and his photos are part of private and corporate collections. His satiric novel, *Cousins' Club*, was a semi-finalist for 2017 BookLife Award for General Fiction. His work, *Wrong Train*, placed second for the 2016 Rick DeMarinis Short Story Award judged by Michael Matrone. He lives in New York City.

Penn Kemp

"Waving hands at clouds"

"Waving hands at clouds," I practice the wind-mill move, Tai Chi, circulating ethereal currents

between my fingers as wave turns to cloud and cloud to wave. The world turns, spinning a part

to despair and another on to be appreciated here. Rolling the wheel, spinning the spoke of cycle.

Watching goldfinch alight, we witness spring unfold. Green leaves creep from tips of redbuds, replacing magenta blossoms. Folding, unfolding.

Penn Kemp is a poet, performer and playwright living in London, Ontario. Her latest books of poetry are *Local Heroes* (Insomniac Press, 2018) and *Fox Haunts* (Aeolus House, 2018). *River Revery* is forthcoming later this year from Insomniac. See www.pennkemp.weebly.com for more on Penn and her work.

I.B. Iskov

Bloom and Doom

My shadow shudders in the open
tired arms of the clinging ghost,
take root in a garden of light.

There are no flowers.
Silence blossoms.
Dies before it can be borne.

Bloom and doom stretch
in a downward pull,
succumb to eternal sleep.

A societal sepulcher sinks
in a prehistoric prediction.
No one expected this.

Under sleepless clouds,
locked in prayer,
my heavy eyes shut tight.

I contemplate the mourning,
early dawn austere
in a grey wake.

The wind continues to tease
in unintentional playful gusts,
garlands my shadow in a shudder.

I.B. (Bunny) Iskov is the Founder of The Ontario Poetry Society (www.theontariopoetrysociety.ca). Bunny has won several contest prizes and she has a number of poetry collections published, including *My Coming of Age* (HMS Press, 2018). Her work has also appeared in several journals and anthologies, including *Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry for The 21st Century* (Lummox Press, 2018, ed. James Deahl). Bunny is the recipient of the Absolutely Fabulous Woman Award, Arts & Culture category, 2017.

Feby Joseph

The Art of Forgetting VI

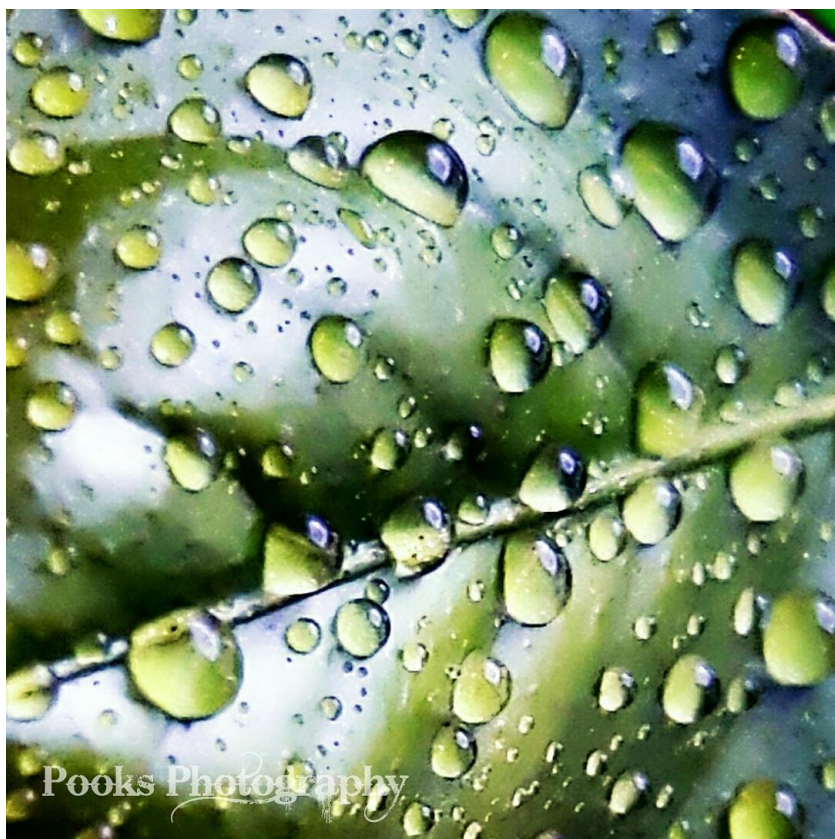
It starts with a poem called “Things in my attic” ...

With red strings used to tie a sheaf of postcards and letters
And large cardboard cubes filled with things committed to
Amnesia or even things that have started to fade –
Names, Numbers, Addresses, Birthdays, Anniversaries ...
Till someday when a forgotten matchbox decides
That the season of rumination is over.

It will then end with a poem called “Things I lost in a fire.”

Feby Joseph hails from the coastal state of Kerala in south India. He presently works as a piano teacher in Mumbai. Some of his works have appeared in *Café Dissensus*, *Oratoria*, *Wild Word* and *Entropy*.

Speckles – Pauline King Shannon



Pooks Photography

Daydream – Pauline King Shannon



Pauline King Shannon is the artist, blogger, poet, photographer, and author known as **Pooks**. Her published book is called *Random Thoughts of an Alien Goddess*. From 2011 to 2015, Pauline was a New School of Colour artist and has had her art in approximately 25 art shows, including Up With Art (2012, 2014, & 2015) and the Twitter Art Exhibit (Orlando, Florida / NYC, NY / Stanton, Norway / Avon, U.K / Canberra, AUS). She is now an independent artist, and is the writer of the WordPress blog: *Pooks82 The Vault*. She lives in London, Ontario.

Sydney Brooman

Liberty

The Fool fell
first

baited by a hungry mind
and mouth

devoured him
like wide hot light

a spilling sun
of wet and pink
in night

It's alright.
we are so young

bees
humming with desire
for colours
lovers

both liars

honey streaks our cheeks

but i knew it
the moment we met:

you can't love
just yet.

Sydney Brooman is a poet and fiction writer from London, Ontario. Their work has been published in *The Temz Review*, *Occasus*, *The Gateway Review*, *River River Journal*, *Coffin Bell*, and *The Iconoclast Collective*. They are the creator of the fiction podcast *Memoriam* and of the slam poetry publication *SNAPS*. They served as Western University's Student-Writer-in-Residence from 2017-2018. The TAP Centre for Creativity recently appointed Sydney as its Emerging Artist in Residence. They also wrote that story you really like. No, not that one—the other one.

Andreas Gripp

Intelligentsia

If Corso had been sober,
he might've made the Norton C.
I say The Beats
beat themselves,
a Robert Frost-
ed mediocrity is better,
and the cake I tried to bake
for One Hundred Ferlinghettis?
Burnt in the Black Forest.

Forest City kingdom
keepers of all things art
and verse
have invalidated me –
I'm just a pan getting flashed,
a fan who's traded teams
twice too often,
my jersey numberless
with the nameplate
brown-on-brown.

The Browning
Bookshop's a parody
of Frisco lit; its basement,
a round-about fire-
trap. Even earwigs hide away

for fear of embers.
Their inebriated
half-a-dozen
will never add to six,
gallery or not.
It's see and just be seen –
there's no need to ask for
substance.

On the day you went
in your wheelchair,
Dadaists flocking drunk,
you had a hole
within your pocket
and the steps weren't worth
the risk. Give your twenty
to the handlers –
they're inhaling Justin's pot,
on the sidewalk just out-
side. They promise
it'll be spent
on a meal. Meatless,
within a hundred
miles farmed.

Even the devil's
food
leaves its darkest crumbs
for birds.
See them fly away
before they're shooed,
murmurations
casting warnings
to those below
who've yet to learn.

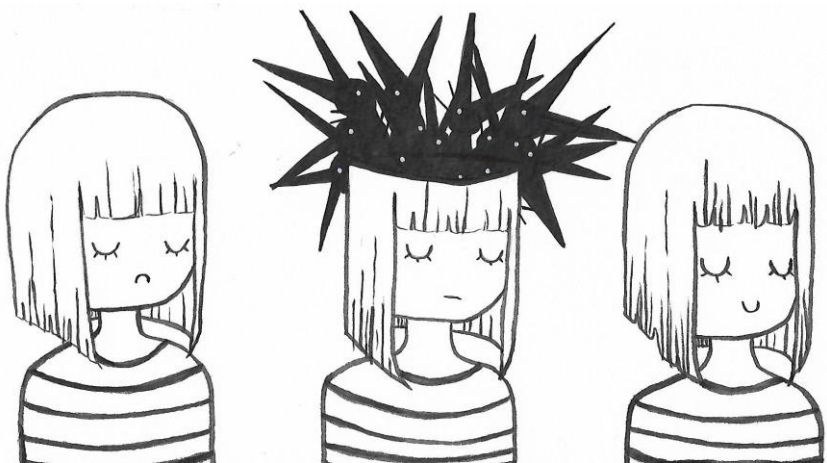
I talk of plucking rainbows
off their shirts;
that all of the crayon's colours
add to *noir*. Now take
a spectrum's sliver
from the mix.
See? It no longer makes
any sense, their words.

Andreas Gripp wrote this poem very recently and thought it belonged here. It's a London, Ontario poem and that's where he lives and puts this mag together.

your girl – **Rayne Rabbit**



crows in my head – **Rayne Rabbit**



murky – Rayne Rabbit



Foggy headed – **Rayne Rabbit**



The Empress and The High Priestess
– Rayne Rabbit



Rayne Rabbit is a young London artist who explores illness, trauma, and emotion in her work. She is currently an undergrad student at Western University earning her BFA. When not painting or in school she likes to drink tea and play with her tabby cat at home. You can follow her on Instagram at @rayne_art_rabbit.

Kate Van Rys

The People Watcher

The people-watcher didn't notice
One particularly keen eye
Unsuspected and unseen by
The spy's glassy greyish gaze.
He is fixated firmly
Upon a conglomeration of faces
Engaged in fervent conversation
In the corner of Good Times –
A friendly coffee pub
Stuck somewhere in the hub
Of the nineteen-seventies.

Unknowingly and naturally
He gave to me the license
To write freely all about
His actions and his substance.
He owns a holographic presence,
A consequence known only to
The lonely few
Who always sit
At tables for one
And eavesdrop on people's lives
And life in general passing by
The storefront windows
On cloudy days.

They live amidst the smokers' haze
And gander for a moment
At what the sun might feel like
On their face.
If only he were seated in another place
Perhaps right by the corner window
Where, hidden by a hanging plant
A person writes on a slight slant
And slyly smiles
Knowing all the while
How to be alone in style.

I glance into the window pane
And it reveals the people-watcher
Stealing my mirage
In the reflection.
I gaze for a short spell
Into mirror-imaged eyes to tell
The desolated spy,
That he is not alone
But immortalized forever in a poem.

But never did a moment fleet by
During which the people-watcher
Caught my spying eye

And never for a moment was I able to share
Some time well spent, if even with
The piteous prying crow
Sitting far from the window.
I wonder how he'd see
A writing spy like me.
But in wondering, I'm alone
And conversations carry on
As night befalls the town, by the
Sun's sudden going down.

My frown has disappeared
From beyond the tinted glass,
But it rests real upon my face,
And what I've feared is true, alas...
The people-watcher didn't notice
He was not alone.

Kate Van Rys is a Spoken Word aficionado and long-time amateur poet. First published on Poetry.com, she has performed at the 2018 Museum London Words Festival, the London Music Club (2016 Poetry Slam) and in living rooms and on sidewalks from Toronto to Seattle. A logician by trade, armchair psychologist by training, and mother of three well-spoken girls by choice, she lives and writes in Thames Centre, Ontario.

Emily Bilman

Fluctuations

Would my melancholy submerge me like a black tide
If suddenly the earth were to swallow the seas?

Without the sea's light, I would be blinded
In my room by the sun-bleached window panes.

I would no longer feel my body as weightless
As the sea's levity, fresh as mint on my mouth.

I would no longer rise from my bed in the morning
With the sea's bittersweet smell of brine and iodine

Diffusing daylight like silk drapery undulating
All along the beryl-beach where children shape

The patient sand with ephemeral castles
With the resolute scrutiny of sculptors.

Near the sea, I daydream with the waves' rhythm
Breathing syllables and words through my ear

The sea breeze intimating my poem's essence
Poetry, like supple plankton, forever vacillating.

Dr. **Emily Bilman** is London (UK) Poetry Society's Stanza representative in Geneva where she lives and teaches poetry. Her dissertation, *The Psychodynamics of Poetry*, was published by Lambert Academic in 2010 and *Modern Ekphrasis* in 2013 by Peter Lang. Two of her poetry books, *Resilience*, and *A Woman By A Well* were published by *Troubador*, UK in 2015. Her poems, essays, and translations of Neruda and Valéry appeared in *The Battersea Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, *The High Window*, *The Journal of Poetics Research*, *Tuck Magazine*, *Offshoots*, *Literary Heist*, *Expanded Field*, and *London Magazine*. "The Tear-Catcher" won the first prize for depth poetry in *The New York Literary Magazine*. She edits and writes poems and essays for a digital ekphrastic publication www.paintedpoetry.org. Her latest poetry book, *The Threshold of Broken Waters*, was published by *Troubador* in September 2018. Her short fiction piece "The Gun" appeared in *Talking Soup*. She blogs on her website: <http://www.emiliebilman.wix.com/emily-bilman>

Carla M. Cherry

African Beauties

*What beautiful flowers.
Are they from a wedding?*

My uncle's funeral.
I am so sorry.

Her eldest daughter leaned in to smell my calla lilies.
Don't touch them, her mother warned,
as she shifted the baby on her hip.
You don't have to get close.
You can still smell them from where you are.

I held them forward.
The little girl stood on her tiptoes
in her white patent leather shoes,
shut her raven eyes, and deeply inhaled two times.

Mother and I wished each other well.
When I got off the elevator, the daughter called out: *Bye!*

As soon as I got home, I poured water in my vase,
eased the flowers inside, and placed it on my dining table.

I got a copper penny from my change jar
and dropped it in the water.
My mother always does that.

The bend of green unopened bulbs,
the sprawl of white petals,
the fragrance unfolding through my kitchen,
made me smile.

Thought about that girl, her flawless brown
skin against white satin and orange lace.
She will likely grow up in this city, where she will learn to

stand firm as she waits to squeeze into rumbling trains
that come to whistling, screeching slow halts,
watch for wandering, unwelcome hands,
and sleep through the wail of sirens.

I should have given her a flower from my bouquet.
Her mother seemed like the type to teach her
how to make a keepsake.

Crisis at the Border

They call us nueva carne.
We pay these smugglers.
They beat us, tell us, *you have no money.*
You have to pay with your body.

It was a big house with covered windows.
Many rooms, with many women.
They made me cook for everyone at first.
Then they fed me pills and cocaine, locked me in a room,
and men came in to rape me.
Wouldn't even let me out to bathe.
I fought them. They bound my hands and feet
with shoelaces to a bed.

After he helped me and my sister cross over
from Honduras, he raped me in a closet.
I asked him why. He said, *you were the prettiest one.*

He bit my mouth so I couldn't scream.

I was kidnapped at the border and jumped
out of the vehicle.
They drew their guns and captured me.
Locked me in a house for days
and six men took turns raping me.

I have four children in Guatemala.
I thought it would have been better
if I had died when I fell from the truck.

My rapist threatened to sell
my three-year-old daughter if I told.

Another got me pregnant with my son.

Duct tape, handcuffs, a gun, a machete.
They can kill us, and no one would say anything.

A sheriff's deputy raped a four-year-old and threatened to
deport her mother to Guatemala if she told.

Some of us tell our families,
doctors or therapists, if we see them.
Some of us tell the police.

Some of us sue,
like two girls who were forced to strip and stay still
while a Customs and Border patrol officer touched them.
He offered them chocolate, potato chips, and a blanket
if they didn't cry.
They settled for \$125,000.
Never enough for the nightmares, the depression.

The president claims to know what happens
to “one in three” of us.

It’s a reason he wants to build a wall.

Most of our attackers never get prosecuted.

There is #MeToo,
but what about us?

With our hands, on our feet
in your stores, your factories, your restaurants,
we pay with our bodies.

Thieving

Moved my stuff to the left side of the dresser,
his to the right,

he still opens my bottles of essential oils:

Lavender.

Peppermint.

Castor.

Argan.

Jojoba.

Today he poured them into a jar
containing some of my cocoa butter lotion.

For the hair and the skin.

He held it to my nose.

Smelled like his hair, his skin,
when he's fresh out of the shower and
lathered up with the goods from my side of the dresser.
He shook the bottle near my ear.

Sounded squishy.

Made me giggle.

He said it's just like the sound of my wet,
when his blue aura caresses my pink,
we're kissing, pulling and pushing,
whispering pet names, first names,
riding my electric current.

He put the container in his pocket,
to always have something that reminds him of me,
of home.

Apologia

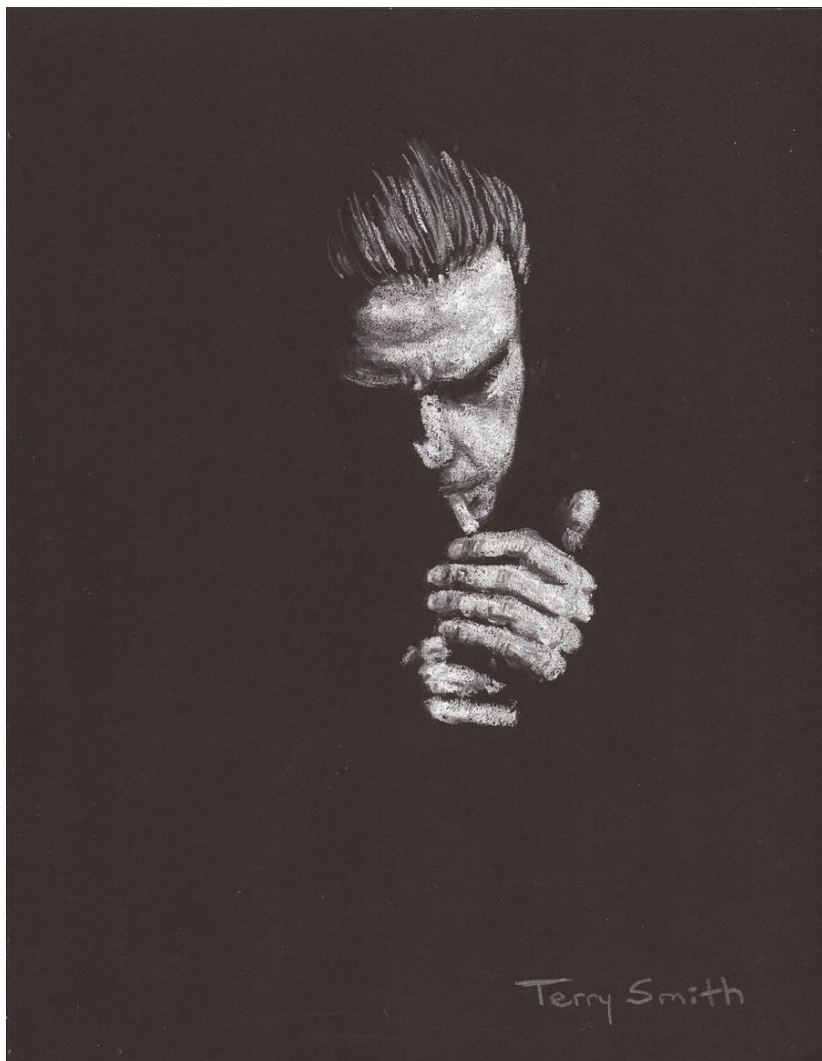
To my Brother on the corner of West 84th and Columbus,

Forgive me for not knowing:
your name after ten years
of seeing you huddled in the same door frame,
if my one-time donation to the Coalition for the Homeless
ever reached you, or how often, what,
or where you've been eating.
I tell myself I'll be even later to work
or getting back from lunch if I stop
to ask what you need. I want to know how you got here,
where your friends and family reside,
if they tried to help you, but
how could I deign to delve well-deep into your story
when I never offered you my change
from when I've broken a twenty
to buy a pack of gum?
I was afraid you'd buy a bottle of liquor
or a pack of cigarettes.
Why should I resent you getting a little relief
and do this kind of river-long ruminating
about helping a brother like you
that I pass by every day
when it takes me less than a minute to write a check
or click a button to pay bills.

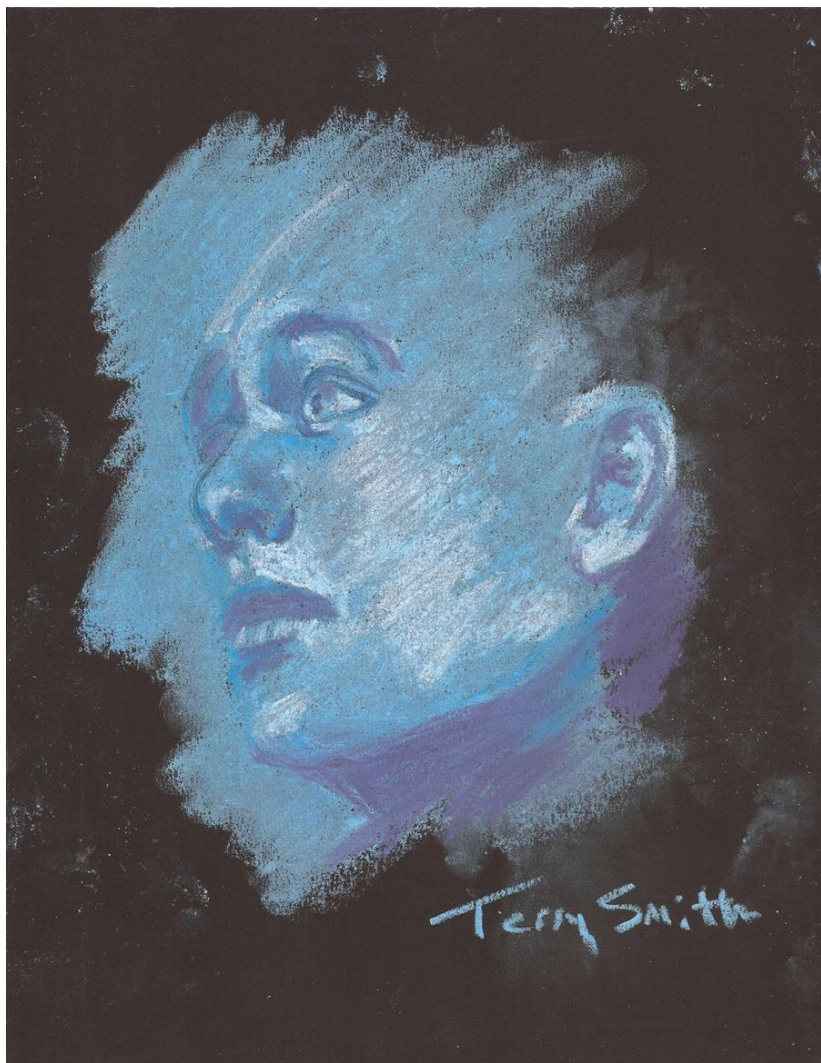
I will never meet these C.E.O.s
who never wonder about any of us
when they're cutting jobs,
raising their prices, their salaries.

Carla M. Cherry is an English teacher and poet living in New York. She has been published in *Anderbo*, *For Harriet*, *Obscura*, *Dissident Voice*, *Random Sample Review*, *Eunoia Review*, *MemoryHouse Magazine*, *Down In The Dirt*, *In Between Hangovers*, *Picaroon Poetry*, *Firefly Magazine*, and *Ariel Chart*. She has published four books of poetry with Wasteland Press: *Gnat Feathers and Butterfly Wings*, *Thirty Dollars and a Bowl of Soup*, *Honeysuckle Me*, and *These Pearls Are Real*.

Reflections of the Day – **Terry Smith**



Blue – Terry Smith



Moth Woman – Terry Smith



Terry Smith is a writer and artist working in The Great Atlantic North East. He has two books of poetry in publication, *Bathroom Graffiti* and *Angel Vomit*. This is his first voyage into the medium of visual art.

Nate Maxson

The Mystery Kingdom

Cryptophasia is the secret and individual languages of twins
But what of trees and hummingbirds?
We have an incomplete taxonomy for fading dreams
And falling stars
For the singular being pluralized

Here, I have a quiet reverie
One would have to go back a century and cite Eliot
With “death’s dream kingdom”
To try and pin it down, if one were to try
Here, ok, I’m a teenager and I’m in the bathtub
Biting my lower lip until it bleeds
Until it blooms a salt bright, jellyfish tendril
Down to my thighs and then *gone*
Like another self was there to observe and then ceased
This is the mystery kingdom
Who we are in memory’s warm current

Incomplete
A bird in each hand (and yet not)
The genus of mystery
Of mirrors and why we cover them
When we’re in mourning
Who it was that built the city
Before the conquerors conquered the conquerors

And who the pyramid?
Before the buried buried the buried
And why the labyrinth? Why indeed
A stone for each of us
And a cairn for the living
A coiled blossom
Something more than the self and other tired objects
Wished upon as it burns up in the atmosphere
You would pray for an unidentified flying object

The white dog in the desert who digs for rain

Dousing Rod

Which discipline of fortune telling is it?
Where I crack open burnt bones pulled from the sand
And read the marrow for patterns
And which is it where I see your handprints?
Your breath
In the winter dust
Where the tulips and irises are waiting
You can dig one up,
Carve a name on it
And put it back
My name perhaps
Or the stream you hope will someday flow there
If it blooms it means you've drawn the water
An instinctive ritual
So I cannot kill this tender bulb that lies beneath us
To name it improperly would be to snuff it out
The instrument is without my reach
It's something earthy
A word in Greek
The way that rivers can briefly touch their roots together
Far inside the world
These bones
Are my own
The Danube and The Nile
The Ohio
And The Amazon

Icarus

Islands pull in wrecks and hulls
With their weight alone
The gravity of siren songs is rendered unnecessary

Their presence
I am on a falling plane
All engines gone out
Lights in the sky

There are arctic owls outside the window
Keeping time and moving south
Whiter than the clouds
Following the snow

And the Russian sleep-experiment is crawling on the walls
He only wants to talk
His breath is a ripple of candle-smoke

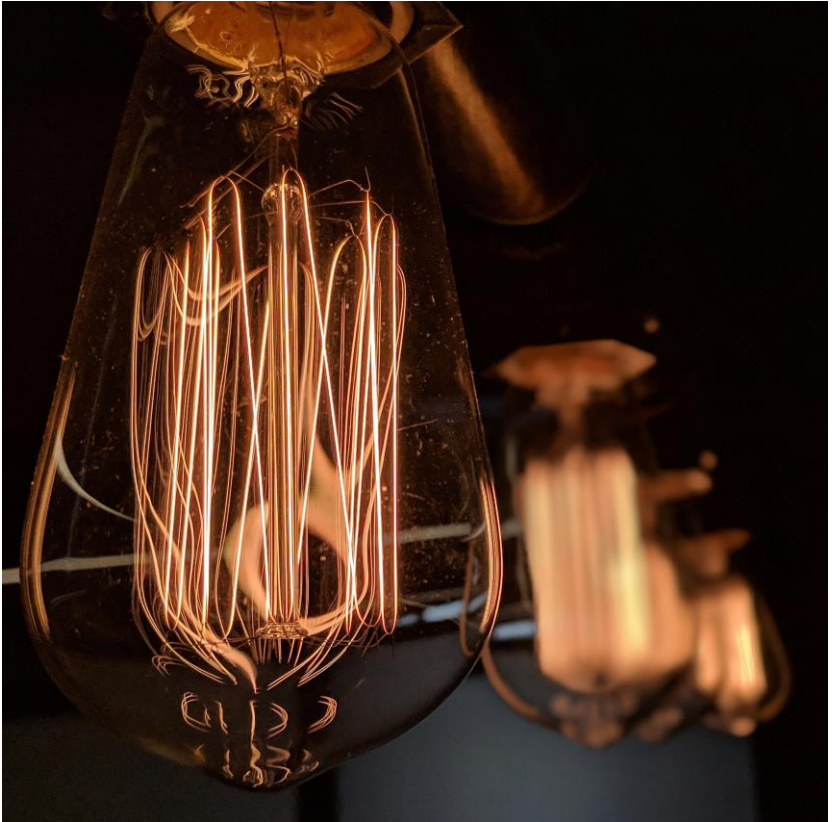
I am making a map out of his whispers
From sugar and ethanol
Out of many fallings
These deserts
The names of the Ravenna Cosmography
Our collective martyrdom on display in a glass case
A hope of wind like you could fall forever

The 20th Century

Is my great grandfather who spoke five languages
Playing chess in a Siberian prison camp
Is my faded t-shirt of The Beatles crossing Penny Lane
It's the light from a cooling star
As our spaceship drifts into black
I am my birth year's unfinished business
The Bethlehem of 89 singing in the cold

Nate Maxson is a writer and performance artist. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Lightbulb – Carmi Levy



Water Fountain At Night – Carmi Levy



The Clock Stops Time – **Carmi Levy**



Kellogg's Factory – Carmi Levy



Staircase in the Sun – Carmi Levy



Dog Takes A Leap – Carmi Levy



Carmi Levy is a London-based technology analyst, journalist, digital marketer, cyclist, husband and father. He bought his first SLR as a teenager in the hope that it would help him tell richer stories. He's been sticking his lens in all sorts of places ever since. He's appeared regularly on national TV and radio, focusing on the impact technology has within business and social contexts. For the story behind these and other photos, his website can be found at <https://www.instagram.com/carmilevy/> where his photographs are complemented by his poetic commentary on each one, bringing a fresh insight and a melding of word and picture to this visual art.

Suzanne S. Rancourt

Bad Girls Speak

to Mrs. P., I'm not sorry that you couldn't find anything

I want to flop my head onto the pull out table tray
my right cheek flush to the plastic, stuck
with post conference exhaustion
like when Mrs. P. made us put our heads down
on hard wooden-topped desks 'cause we'd been bad
which was better than when that boy who liked me
would falsify the "who got caught talking" chit sheet
so he could be the one wielding
the extra thick wooden ruler
that struck my palm for every mark
he made on the list beside my name,
a series of agitation in number 2 pencil scrawl.
I took it. No tears.
He was riddled with head lice,
his clothes rank with kerosene.

I want to put my head down on my desk again because
pushing boundaries of socialization is heavy
like moving sod the plow guy rolls up onto my lawn
only to have it emerge with spring snow melt,
the gouges carved into the Earth like those penned gashes
deprecating names on the tops of ink dyed desks.

I was five or six years old and thought
I was a normal child
but Mrs. P. made it clear that I was not,
she felt that punishment in the supply closet
with the lights out would fix me.
I don't know what possessed me in the closet this one day
when I sensed all the smells – Elmer's Glue, pencils,
sharpening shavings, ink, construction paper, metal tacks,
the string on the hanging light switch
I was too short to reach,
rubber bands, rubber cement, chalk – yellow and white –
I was overwhelmed.
I was not alone in that room and together
the darkness and I rearranged every single item
that I could reach and lift.

I want to put my head down
on this plastic airline pull out tray and weep
in this cabin's red eye flight
for all the kids Mrs. P. didn't fix.

Unhinged

when a stone leaves the hand that flung it

when air escapes a constricted vocal cord
as a vomiting scream wild
with enraged urgency and angst erupts

when kinetic makes contact – leaves bruises
the color of bludgeoned

when the hammer drives the firing pin
into a child's memory of cap guns,
explodes a thousand times greater
than a simple pop & puff

then, the emotion, a chunk of lead propelled, is unhinged
from the mansplaining,
the antagonistic prod of condescending joust

i reflect
to be marginalized – a side note or comment
placed in the periphery, only seen
when the reader desires or deems worthy of notice

i reflect
to be silenced – a voice, a room, a home,
a door closed upon it,
a mind made up, barred entrance,
not worth the time to view, hear, acknowledge

when words are a privilege
and voice a human right thrown as stones,
they fall from the wind

Tanning the Hides with Sisyphus

Staged on a platform, the hide trimmer –
its eight foot blades
a caricature of antiquated push lawn mowers,
a rotational blur spun parallel
to the stained rollers that wrung out
Chromide VI wash. You were pedestalled
away from the rest of us – elevated under the classic
low-hanging, high-wattage light bulb,
the main attraction in a brilliant aura
of Aldehyde wet white
and Chromium Sulphate wet blue –
never distracted, you never spoke.

Us others stirred penance
silent flesh in lagoon-vats of pickling, wash, dyes,
hides riddled with maggots hatched en route
from New Zealand. Our clothing rotted
arms, abdomens, shoulders bled of whatever color
the hides were dyed that day.
Working second shift was a blessing
that cooled the stench and poison we consumed
with each inhalation, each pore of flesh.
Communal transgressions – a wedge of distance –
between the blatting of the butchered
and every hide we cut,
roughed, and trimmed ragged excesses,

gluttonous faux pas
became piecework promotions,
competitions that required two hands, two arms.

We stacked hides on ten-foot see-saw trollies,
heaved teetering mounds of skin, skidded
iron wheels across lime-pitted concrete,
grunted with the wet of every six-foot hide,
our flesh burned, Dantean, caisson rolled,
into the drying room & blast ovens
where carcasses were stretched and toggled
onto mural-sized mesh screens
stacked upright to accommodate the neat slip
into an envelope of Sirocco until dry-stiff.

Skins never stopped coming, vats
never emptied, dead always floating,
another trolley to be loaded –
a rhythm to foot peddle, released rollers and blades –
I was new on the trimmer, a natural,
damn near made piecework my second night,
one hundred eighteen dozen creatures
to your two hundred plus.
I wasn't even trying.

Paychecks

Paychecks

Was I your last stone, final shove off, that night
mid-shift, you shut down your trimmer,
stood at the end of mine and said,
my brother lost his arm last week on that machine.

Your voice, shammy soft,
you stood holding space with a pause of presence,
you were done, you quit that night,
your statement a trickle of pebble,
a forebodance of burden that you shouldered back,
a capstone of fate,
what you could not do for your brother
you did for me.

Sculling in Winnipeg

I am a swimmer in between
Salvation Army methadone queues
and Higgins Street City Mission. On the Edge
of Moontime Voices and
black sharpie found poetry, “If I could tell you this...”

The Red Road Lodge offers clean housing
inside mosaics of Sedna mermaids
and buffaloes – a chink of jagged context.

This city is in between
the NDNs huffin’ on the corner
of Henry Street and the human cocoons,
twist rolled like doobies in pissy blankets
on lawns worn down to brown, packed dirt.
Oh, Mother

take us back clean. Oh, Mother
take us back refreshed in this winter of dreams,
a torpid civilization, twitch, jerks, steady
like dog legs, like running wolves,
caribou.

Oh, Mother, take us back,
no one replenished the inukshuk –
I am a swimmer
between Salvation and Higgins.

Suzanne S. Rancourt, Abenaki/Huron descent, is a multi-modal Expressive Arts Therapist with degrees in psychology and creative writing. Her book of poetry, *Billboard in the Clouds*, received the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas First Book Award. Her second, *murmurs at the gate* (Unsolicited Press), is forthcoming in May 2019. Ms. Rancourt's work has been published extensively. She is a Veteran.

Cynthia – **Andreas Gripp**



David Haskins

A Troubadour's Exit Strategy

200 years to find a plan – Stephen Hawking

A wild last waltz
to reach the stars
4.2 light years away
where there are no pink candy Christmas trees
no Rocky Horror Picture Show
no marigolds and daisies

All the world's a stage
and we're leaving on the next one*
Baby pack light**
a caravan of emigrants
no tear gas no fences
the planet gets a reprieve

celebrate the lottery winners
the cobbled together astronauts
the at-all-costs survivors
who made it on board
award them medals so their children
learn life belongs to the chosen

the abandoned will be anonymous
the missing yesterday's fishwrapper
the murdered victims of circumstance

Will despots go home to spend time with family?

Will autodidacts hunker down in caves?

What would you bring?

I'd bring you but

you're already there

streaming the universe

from cellular to numinous

we are all gone to spirit

* *Perth County Conspiracy*

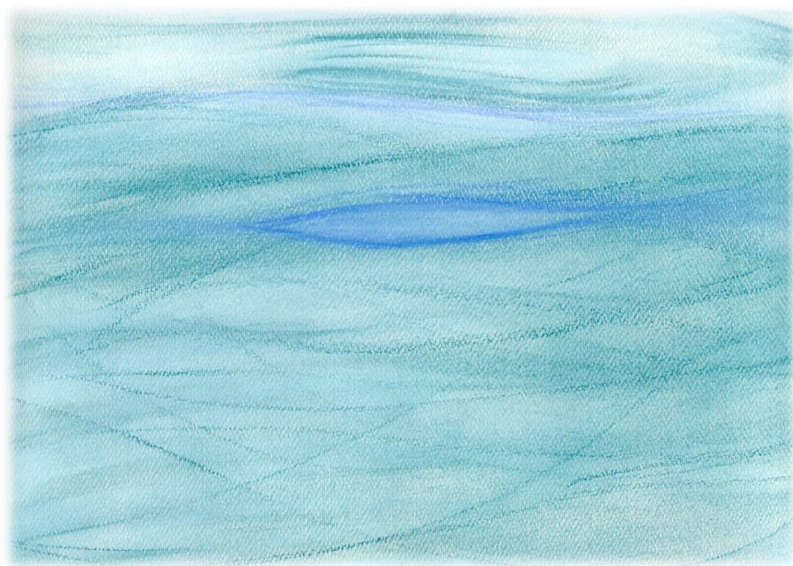
** *Jon Brooks*

David Haskins is the author of two books, *This House Is Condemned* (Wolsak & Wynn), a literary memoir, and *Reclamation* (Borealis), a collection of poems. His poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction appear in over 40 literary journals including *Oxfordian*, *Windsor Review*, *Great Lakes Review*, *Fiddlehead*, *Canadian Forum*, *Journal of Canadian Fiction* as well as in anthologies such as *Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry in the 21st Century*, *Saving Bannister*, and *Voices from the Niagara*. He has won first prizes from the CBC Short Story Competition, the Canadian Authors Association, the Ontario Poetry Society, and twice from Arts Hamilton. He lives in Grimsby, Ontario.

Implosions – **Farrukh Chishtie**



Calming Blues – **Farrukh Chishtie**



Farrukh Chishtie

On Implosions and Calming Blues

Whirlpools left in past wakes,
turn into black and violent
and inwards someday:
dark pools assault
in imploding
nightmarish
chokes...

Freeing from such enmeshing an-nihilisms,
is not (I've found) fleeing via distractions,
or escapes in cyclic addictive rides,
but in directly moving through
these freezing haunts:

in letting
calming blues, individuated strengths
floating with fuzzy melancholia,
accepting and yet resisting,
takeovers of the mind,
equilibrating turbulence
into steady fluidity for
the body to regain its full
awareness.

Farrukh Chishtie is a poet and writer presently based in Bangkok, Thailand, where he is employed as the Science and Data Lead of the SERVIR-Mekong hub, hosted at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center. He is also the editor of *Subh-e-Nau* monthly since 2005, a first publication in Pakistan which features environment and public health concerns for a wider audience. His first book of poems, *Snowflake Sleep*, was published in 2016 by Harmonia Press.

Lela Burt

Without Origin

*Most people are other people. Their thoughts
are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry,
their passions a quotation.*

— Oscar Wilde

Biographies blur

One historic lineage melding into the next

A shattered chorology

Of fragmented memories belonging

To other people

All people are other people

Composed of broken mirrors

Endlessly reflecting

And refracting identities

Of false fractured selves

Our thoughts are outsider opinions

A simulation of creation

Bred to flourish organically

Yet destined to

Wither without roots

Our words are manifestations
Of a poet's diction
A plagiarizing of passion
And feelings borrowed
From the literary dead

In our conclusion fatalistic eulogies act
As citations for lives lived in quotation
A bibliography of the
Sentences stripped from
Nepotistic tongues

Deserted Language

Language is starting to remind me of a ghost town
whose inhabitants decided it was high time to get up
and walk away.

Here, humanity exists only as a stamp
on the mud-streaked window panes,
in the empty beer glasses,
and of the plastic bag tumbleweeds.

A single gunshot,
deserted,
marks death at sundown
on a village of false store front;
empty signifiers without substance holding them up.

Lela Burt is passionately creative with a fascination with time, nature, and all things Beethoven. She loves drinking espresso and writing in coffee shops, going on adventures in the woods, and most of all practicing her French horn. Lela is currently in her second year at Western University in London, Ontario, pursuing a degree in English Language and Literature, and in Theatre Studies, and is a student of the School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities (SASAH). Lela will also be directing the Western Summer Shakespeare production of *Twelfth Night*, which will be performed in London in August 2019.

Gregory Wm. Gunn

Flaming Nimrods

We are flaming nimrods,
fire primates, scratching
ourselves with carnal desires,
tracking after meat, all the while
hot stingers lie beneath
our barbaric hides.

We are starving chimps,
aping ourselves and our prey,
whose empathy lies in hurt,
whose sacrificial directive
is the sole charity of
lethal logic.

We're new-age, high-tech
primates who search for
something in our offspring
in order to show them new
avenues towards Utopia, a trek
that will hone their skills
to raze obstacles that
thwart their advancement.

We've grown lethargic,
a blood-stained mammalian
legacy cast in cosmic climes
and starry language.

We are less hirsute,
starving poachers lying
in wait at Earth's edge.

We be pedagogical
Primates, concentrating
on the tramping of our
apprentices, to be fixed
upon the altar only to
be masticated, sharpened
by our molar's curriculum,
forever resounding in
our misshaped crania.

Conquering clever worms
are we, ingesting decaying
animals, then we raise up
on hind legs in grandiose
parody, hideous puppets,
fabricating fatal technologies
from discarded bones and
slay dragons with their own
skeletons, then fashion
cancerous revisions
of claws and feathers.

New and improved versions
of our ancestors in some
non-sequitur service,
carnivorous of ill-conceived,
idealistic beasts, our
reptilian nature, whose
primate passionate
consequences are
often contradicted.

Gregory Wm. Gunn lives in London, Ontario, and has been widely published in various literary journals including *The Toronto Quarterly*, *Side B Magazine*, *Inscribed Magazine*, *Burning Wood*, *20 X 20 Magazine*, *Crack the Spine*, *Covalence*, *Blue Lake Review*, *Yes Poetry*, *The Light Ekphrastic*, and *Synaeresis*. His latest book is *The Higher Self: Preferred Poems 1981-2016* and is available from Lulu Press.

David Stones

Incidental Beauty

You do not command
your beauty.

It is not forged
or tethered
not summoned
from the sky
on burnished wings
to ride the gauntlet
of your hunger.

You do not bid it
or require its purpose.
No reins
or fiat
direct its path
across your body.

Knowing no instruction
it is something merely
within you
and upon you
that resides.

It is that your beauty
is incidental
that fills my eyes
with you

and makes you
so beautiful.

Searchlight Words

(on reading e e cummings)

his words (searchlight words)
are wine and razorblades
zigzag
the page
like flags
of locusts
surprise like crows
piercing with their needle throats
the purity of haystacks
pressed to hills
under the circling sky

his words (searchlight words)
in my eyes are wires
threaded
with the logic
of an unfailing beauty
encased in blooms
and honeyed though
my tongue this night
it cannot wrestle
the ceaseless crunch
of their suddenness

when i read to you these poems
i find in me
such small clear streams

that find in you
the likewise limpid tides
of our perfection

David Stones is a poet, performer and spoken word artist, residing in both Toronto and Stratford, Ontario. He transformed his first book of poetry, *Infinite Sequels* (2013), into a one man show of the same name. Hailed by London Free Press as a “brilliant and beautiful piece of theatre,” Stones performs *Infinite Sequels* throughout Southern Ontario, with 12 shows slated for 2019, including Hamilton Fringe and several shows in Stratford. Stones’ poetry has appeared in numerous print and on-line journals, including *Synaeresis 5* (Harmonia Press), *Arborealis* (Beret Day Books), *Open Heart 13* (Beret Day Books), *Universal Oneness* (AuthorsPress, India) and *Her Royal Majesty* (Paris, France). He was the winner of the Brooklin Poetry Society Poetry Contest in 2018 and is currently preparing two manuscripts for publication.

John C. Mannone

In the *News*

Pages A1-A3

Today's record high supersedes the 1882 figure, 101°F; in the car a two-year-old left behind dies. Global Warming blamed.

Foreclosures are on the rise despite apparent increases in the housing market.

Marriages failing at better than fifty percent. Abortions doubled.

A young man is shot to death in his car in a gas station by the pump for gently blowing his horn at a guy who was just dumped by his wife for physical abuse.

Murders from gang violence up by 20%.

Racial profiling cited as the root cause: a Black man accidentally shot while reaching for his license during a “routine” traffic stop.

Commemoration services will be held this evening for the executed men, women and children of faith when ISIS stormed a school in Nigeria.

Page A33

A solemn congregation will remember the death of Jesus Christ during Holy Week.

Philadelphia Experiment

On the Sea of Galilee, 30 AD

After the feeding of five thousand,
the sun settles beneath the waves, and
the sailing boat lurches into the calm,
its bow creasing the water that's still
shimmering with magenta.

But a wind off basaltic mountains
stirs the inland sea and the sailors
row hard against the churn, fearing
the ghostly moon and the illumination
of shadows moving toward them.

A single apparition fogs the water,
and the men cry out, they hear a voice
coming from the shroud skimming
the waves. A voice they recognize
as it materializes.

He's the one who commands the sea
and the wind, and all the forces
of nature. He fashions electromagnetism
and gravity in some elaborate way
of shaping time, even though the hull

is only made of wood, not steel.
In a flash of blue light, through a portal
of space-time, the boat is teleported
four nautical miles away to the dock
at Capernaum, in a twinkling of an eye.

Author's note: In 1943, witnesses claimed an eerie green-blue glow surrounded the hull of the U.S. Navy destroyer escort USS Eldridge before it inexplicably disappeared from the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, and hours later momentarily appeared in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia before returning to Philadelphia. Some believe this was a secret government experiment on teleportation and time travel.

John C. Mannone has work in *Artemis Journal*, *Blue Fifth Review*, *Poetry South*, *Peacock Journal*, *Baltimore Review*, *Pedestal*, *Riddled With Arrows*, *Eye to the Telescope* and others. He was awarded an HWA Scholarship (2017), won the Jean Ritchie Fellowship (2017) in Appalachian literature and served as celebrity judge for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (2018). He has three poetry collections: *Apocalypse* won 3rd place in the Elgin Book Awards (2017); *Disabled Monsters* was featured at Southern Festival of Books (2016) and *Flux Lines* (Celtic Cat, 2018). He edits poetry for *Abyss & Apex* and others. jcmannone.wordpress.com

Missing the Cat – **Andreas Gripp**



Eye to the Sky – **Andreas Gripp**



Carrie Lee Connel

Sleeves

—June 18, 2018, *Couplets Poetry Series, The Arts Project*

It's said you wear your heart on your sleeve,
a dot-to-dot story amongst the freckles.

One

A canvas of black & flesh-tone nature:
whale swims through currents of veins,
an owl perches on the humerus,
a fox runs down the ulna
to a pine tree forest.
And, incongruously,
odd-man-out Sisyphus
forever rolls his rock
up the radial track to the elbow.

Two

I have tried to decipher yours before:
a jumble of random images
leaving the viewer with an impression
of Japanese influence,
dotted crimson throughout.
A half-clothed woman
(is she your wife?)
peeks out from the edge of your customary black t-shirt.

A fox head superimposed on a bright sun
and another fox running around the forearm,
marking the downward limit of three-quarter sleeves
to be hidden by dress shirt cotton in a Master roll.

Three

I've seen you wear that sleeveless shirt before.
The shoulder reveal of three shrimp,
a towering wave,
and a whale in half-sleeve breach.
The other shoulder devoid of ink.
Perhaps a design has been chosen
and you're waiting six months
for certainty,
leaving you unbalanced.

Four

Maybe I've seen you before:
double-sleeved exhibition from shoulder to wrist.
Hair pulled back in a ponytail.
I read your story surreptitiously
under the guise of viewing the nudes on the walls.
I am disappointed by the first popular culture image I see:
Jack Skellington and Sally sit on the shoulder.

Musical notes travel down to a portrait
(a loved one lost?)
of a woman in flowing garment.
I'm called back to my seat before I can
read more of your story.

Five

I'm in the minority,
one-in-five.
My heart tattooed,
scored by loss and injury,
secrets and judgment,
perceived slights
and petty resentment.
My skin un-inked,
marked only by the passage of time:
crow's feet and laugh lines,
the furrowed brow of worry,
and imagined stitches
along both wrists.

Lady's Fan

—June 20, 2018, Breast Care Centre,
St. Joseph's Health Centre

A cooling breeze
passes over my skin.
A flutter of embossed paper:
turquoise and white lace.
In between bouts of fanning,
you droop,
appear to sleep,
then moan yourself awake
to start the flutter again.
They call your name: Maria.
Tall, almost spindly;
the cruel bully may say “giraffe.”
Skin the shade of creamed coffee
yet touched with orange syrup –
perhaps too long under a sunbed
or a mishap with spray tan.
I think you beautiful;
wonder if your age is close to mine.
Are you ill? Is it a hot flash?
Is it anxiety as I feel,
anticipating the next test?

We are a community of women –
waiting to know if the future
holds a journey none of us wish
to embark upon.

My own fan sits at the bottom
of my purse,
anticipating the brimstone burning
of the sermon come Sunday.

Clarissa

—December 9, 2018, St. James Westminster

Re-christened in this holy space.
The shock of a cold baptism
calling forth a pinprick of tears;
the parent-bestowed name lacking somehow
(or without you beside me, I am someone else).
Perhaps she has seen through the façade
and named the authentic me;
a recognition of soul within this mortal casing.
Maybe with a slinking, shimmying movement,
I can shed this skin and be Clarissa:
one free of guilt and shame,
before the acidic juice of experience
touched my tongue.
But it is only a lapse of memory
at the end of five years' acquaintance.

Worship

—July 29, 2018, St. James Westminster, London

Black silk scarf brushed with cerulean blue,
wrapped about the head like a turban,
covers your strawberry blonde tresses.
Earlobes left exposed to reveal
four-inch ankhs hanging down;
made of balsa wood, the weight together
not more than the feather Anubis
measures against the Pharaoh's heart.
I wonder why you sit here in a wooden pew
instead of kneeling on the ground
beneath a canopy of branches –
oak, maple and yew speaking in tongues
only the wind understands.
You wear a cotton tunic and flowing skirt to the ankles.
With your waist-length hair loose,
you should be sky-clad
in front of the Goddess,
lighting candles at the four directions,
invoking the elements.
Evocative of the Pre-Raphaelite ideal:
a mid-19th Century spinster sister
living to her own doctrine;

heavy-lidded eyes reminiscent
of Lizzie Siddal's self-portrait, painted
if she had lived a decade longer.

Carrie Lee Connel lives in London, Ontario, with her husband and two cats. She has a Master of Library and Information Science and a BA in English Language and Literature from Western University. Her short stories have been published in *Synaeresis* and in the print anthologies *Fterota Logia 1*, *Tales From the Realm, Volume One* from Aphotic Realm, and *NOPE Horror Quarterly* from TL;DR Press. She's the author of two published books of poetry from Harmonia Press.

Muriel Allingham

At Home In Winnipeg

it's minus a million
in Starbuck's car park,
where high-rise canyons raise
turbulent tunnels of downdraughts,
and ghosts of iced perception
steal warmth from brown thrashed froth
and cinnamon cream;

pale crystals freeze to my lip,

as I tread back allies, where carnival cackles of
rock-salt pops, beneath
sullen lean-tos of aged brick.
faded boxcar mosaics
in angular letters
prove that colour does hibernate,
as chilled portraits of anarchy

watch in frozen judgement.

on a glacial corner, the lonely cathedral of
blanched stone swells
beyond its boundaries of urbanity;

restrained in midwinter's gloom,
its casements of masonry opulence
rouse only a fragile hue of amber,
under January's faint sun.

but I don't know religion,

a prayer snatched into icy air;
files of sermons once
uplifting tenants of
a stranger's truth, holds tight to the
cold, smooth stones of reminiscence,

waiting to ponder ancient reflections.

I am ensconced in rippling snow that
billows like a veil across barren fields.
recollections dredged upwards
by spastic neurons firing along
cognitive stamps of another life;
I am fluent in sweet desolate landscapes;

those vast open planes, swept by subzero air.

gripping corner posts and rooftop eaves,
hardened tendrils of grey effigies
suspend, like gruesome fingers
of sculpted stone;
yellowing under winter's age;
they drape,

over window sills,

as the midnight shift,
battles grime worn snow
along narrow roads,
zero-dark-hundred's convoy
scrapes packed resistance;
salt that melts, then freezes
to harden like rock,
while marching machines
flash and flicker under sodium vapours,

clouding night's shadow in jaundiced light.

and I know those phantom pains of isolation;
a foreign acquaintance of impermanence;
journeys, assigned to some dormant knowledge
that I belong here, at the frigid corner of
Portage and Main.

The Days I Strain Against

I will discredit the modest humming bird,
buzzing tightly bound iris pods
between grainy rocks, skinned in moss;
a thousand heat beats,
of iridescent flight.

and then, resist the glimmer of sunlight
that undulates over black, watery depths,
while spring drips from the branch,
in full bodied blooms.

I'll bite its ankle, stripping it to bone
where glossy neurons
travel broadly through the spectrum,
and daylight grazes night;
the meat of it, not tasted
it is fleeting, then abates.

it's tomorrow's frenzy that pilots
days, partitioned by reminders
to look, to see, to feel,
as the sun skips through a green canopy,
across the open roofed car,
that swallows a narrow road.

we are watched by painted clown faces
of period worn, summer homes;
their romance catches my heart,
but no space is cleared.

I find a honed, steel edge and
dip the knife in
flushing out those scars of beauty
for they cannot be real; too grand, too simple.

a moment's charm is carried away
on marshmallow clouds,
tinged with grey lace;
a poodle's tail, or an elephant's trunk,
drifting under cerulean.
and yet; this moment, this splendour, this nature,
these are the days I strain against.

Muriel Allingham was initially inspired by technical writing and enjoyed finding creative ways to deliver procedural and instructional prose. She lives in London, Ontario.

Communication Station – **Andreas Gripp**



Wired In – **Andreas Gripp**





Another
London

poems from a city still searching for itself

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Synaeresis arts + poetry

Call for Submissions Issue 8

poetry (1 to 6 poems)
flash fiction (1 to 2 stories)
photography (1 to 6 photos)
artwork (1 to 6 pieces)

Please email your submission as a separate attachment (MS Word/PDF/JPG). Please include a brief bio of yourself as well in case your work is selected for publication.

Email address: harmoniapress@hotmail.com

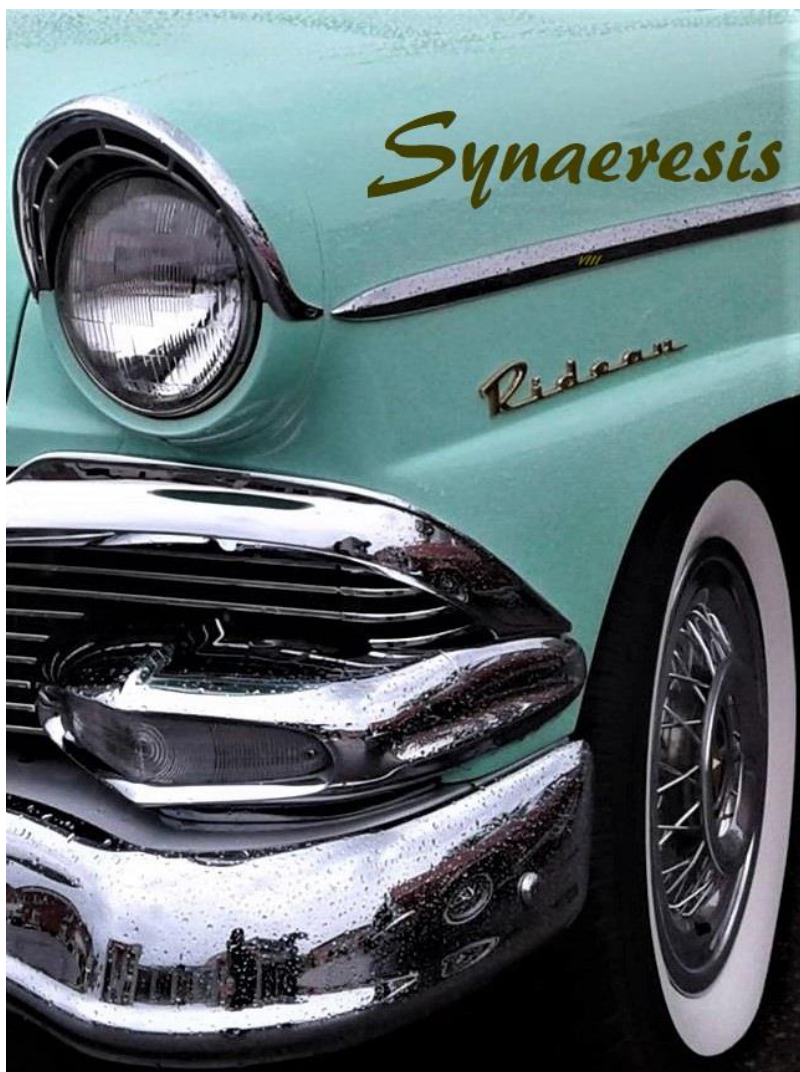
Response time is within one week. . Submissions will be accepted from **September 6/19 until January 6/20.**

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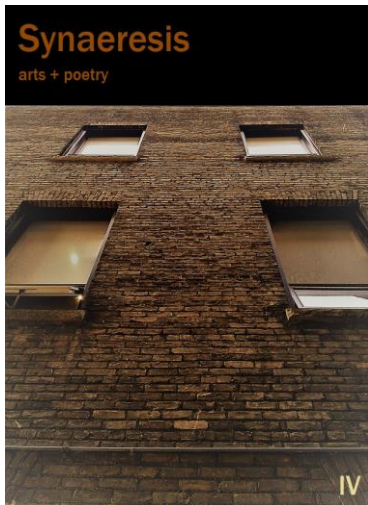
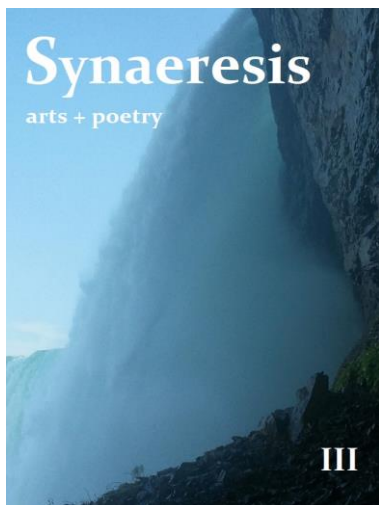
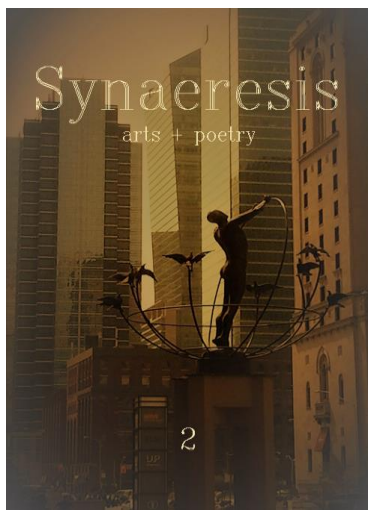
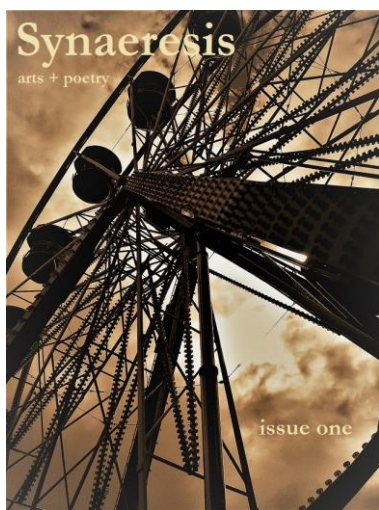
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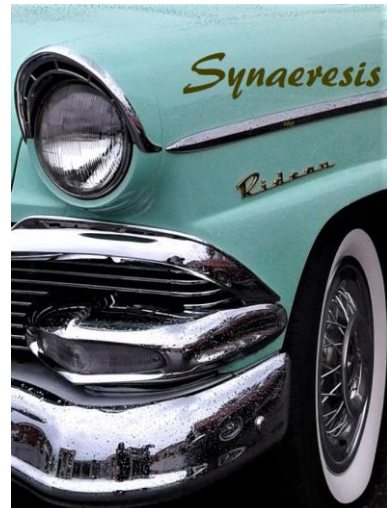
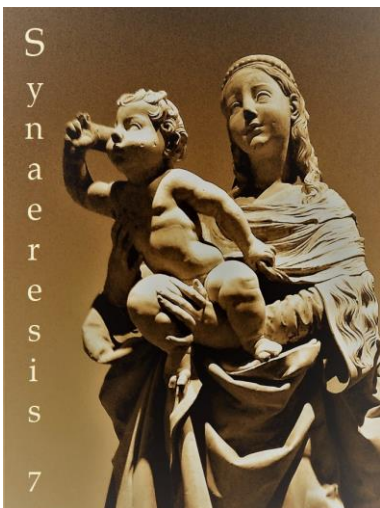
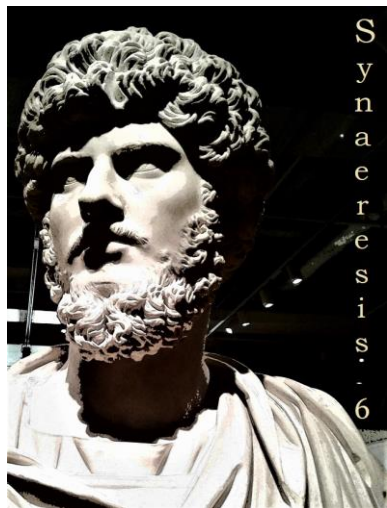


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Synaeresis
arts + poetry



Synaeresis VII

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